

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/PRIVACY ACTS SECTION
COVER SHEET

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FEATURE PRESS SERVICE

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STATE DEPARTMENT BAN ON "CONTROVERSIAL" WRITERS SCORED BY ACLU

ACLU has asked Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to reconsider his recent directive calling for removal of books by "controversial" writers from overseas libraries of the U.S. Information Service. The directive which ACLU protested was issued after Senator Joseph R. McCarthy began his current inquiry of the Voice of America program.

In a letter to Dulles, ACLU said that the order not only is "contrary to the spirit of civil liberties" but "on the practical level unwise as a measure to combat Communist propaganda."

"In our judgment, U.S. government sponsorship or approval of publications for library use abroad should be based solely on the nature and the value of the books themselves and not upon those who wrote them", the letter said. It was signed by Patrick Murphy Malin, ACLU's executive director, and Elmer Rice, chairman of the Union's National Council on Freedom from Censorship.

"Furthermore", the letter continued, "may we urge that you review the directive noted above with a view to its revision, because it forecloses use of possible helpful material to counter Soviet propaganda. In the propaganda field the U. S. government should be unfettered as possible so that all necessary avenues of approach to peoples abroad both in front of and behind the iron curtain countries may be utilized. Anti-Soviet propaganda, which can be delved out of the works of American Communists or fellow travelers may well be a useful tactic if properly utilized in exposing the lies and deception of Communist propaganda."

Senator McCarthy's subcommittee hearings "till now do not justify a categorical discrimination against use of certain publications merely because of the political or moral character of their authors", the two ACLU officials observed.

"We do not, of course, expect, nor would we want, the U. S. government to sponsor ideas to which it is opposed or which by their very nature are inconsistent with, or in opposition to, the political and moral principles on which our country is based," their letter said. "Consistent with this position, we believe that literature and other forms of art must be judged by their content and quite apart from the alleged political or other views of their authors."

CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE CLEARS FOUNDATIONS OF SUBVERSIVE TAINT

In clearing the tax-free foundations of the taint of subversion, a Congressional Committee not only gave these organizations a clean bill of health but lauded their accomplishments.

The gist of the report turned in by a special House committee investigating the foundations is that while the Communists made determined efforts to gain a foothold in these groups, they succeeded barely at all. The committee was formed originally by the late Rep. E. E. Cox of Georgia.

"It has been established", said the report, "that some foundation funds have gone to the support of the Communist line or to proved Communists or Communist sympathizers, but where this occurred it is our belief that it occurred inadvertently or through the stealth and deceit of Communist 'infiltrates'."

Beyond this, however, the committee found that the foundations' "dominant and most significant function has been displayed in supplying the risk or venture capital expended in advancing the frontiers of knowledge."

"In entering these fields", the committee found, "they knowingly invited risk and therefore assume the calculated risks as justified because of the great good that may evolve for mankind...".

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